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Items 49, 51, 52, 54, 55, 56, 58, 59, 61, 62, 113 and 124
of the preliminary list*

Integrated and coordinated implementation of and follow-up to the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits in the economic, social and related fields

Information and communication technologies for development

Macroeconomic policy questions

Sustainable development

Implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and strengthening of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat)

Globalization and interdependence

Eradication of poverty and other development issues

Operational activities for development

Agriculture development and food security

Social development

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

Eradication of poverty and other development issues

Letter dated 6 March 2009 from the Permanent Representative of the Sudan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith a copy of the Muscat Declaration on Water containing the conclusions and recommendations adopted by the first Ministerial Forum on Water of the Group of 77, held in Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, from 23 to 25 February 2009.

* A/64/50

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On behalf of the Group of 77 and China, I would appreciate it if the present letter and its annex could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under items 49, 51, 52, 54, 55, 56, 58, 59, 61, 62, 113 and 124 of the preliminary list.

(*Signed*) Abdalmahmood Abdalhaleem **Mohamad**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of the Republic of the Sudan
to the United Nations
Chairman of the Group of 77

Annex to the letter dated 6 March 2009 from the Permanent Representative of the Sudan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Muscat Declaration on Water adopted by the first Ministerial Forum on Water of the Group of 77

We, the Ministers in charge of water resources of the member States of the Group of 77, met on the occasion of the first G-77 Ministerial Forum on Water, held in Muscat, Sultanate of Oman, from 23 to 25 February 2009 and agreed on the following conclusions and recommendations:

1. The vital importance of water to sustain habitat and species' survival and human existence was recognized. The key importance of water resources and sanitation in achieving progress in all fronts of development in the South was reiterated as well as the fact that improving and promoting easy access to water and sanitation production, irrigation and hydro-energy production will lead to tremendous progress in the eradication of poverty and food insecurity, in accordance with the Millennium Development Goals and Integrated Water Resources Management.

2. Despite the great number of institutions addressing the issues of water management and projects for access to water, progress towards reaching the goal of halving the number of people without access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation has been slow and uneven.

3. The main challenges, namely, the lack of capacity, financing and political will to implement the decisions and other actions recommended by numerous conferences and meetings, were stressed. We reiterate that the knowledge, skills and technologies exist for managing water resources and providing water services for all in support of development.

4. We stress the importance of strengthening the networking of research and development institutions on water as well as data information, equipped by new technology in national and regional information centres on water resources, which received unanimous support.

5. There is a need for countries of the South to explore new ways and means among themselves in order to tackle basic needs in terms of water resources. There is also a vital need to be active in both the management and development of water resources and infrastructures in order to increase access to and the effective use of safe drinking water and food security for developing countries' populations.

6. We encourage developing countries to work together to strengthen strategic partnerships so as to contribute to the sharing of knowledge, innovation and transfer of technology for better access to improved water resources and sanitation. Special efforts must be made to build and sustain scientific capacity at both the individual and institutional levels; additional resources and partnerships are necessary to bring science-based solutions to critical water challenges and social and economic needs and to secure water for developing countries. As part of the follow-up action, a number of steps should be pursued in terms of the exchange of scientific and technological know-how among developing countries that could facilitate the sharing of information on science and technology in promoting water resources data, including:

    - Knowledge on managing shared water resources

    - Enhancing the capacities of member States in negotiation skills and providing technical advisory services in the field

    - Promoting the exchange of experiences, best practices and lessons learned in implementing projects dealing with water resources, sanitation and environment management

- Aligning research programmes with regional and national priorities and emerging issues

- Enhancing hydrologic and meteorological data-collection capabilities and developing new data improve assessments

- Supporting research that improves the fundamental scientific understanding of water resour management and sanitation

- Identifying new sources of funding with capacities to scale up available resources and exchange expertise

- Identifying new approaches for additional funding for capacity-building and infrastructures for wa resources, irrigation and sanitation

- Providing a searchable interactive database of scientists, centres and services to facilitate and encour information-sharing and cooperation among partners

- Promoting innovative technologies to address the negative impacts of water-related disasters such floods, droughts, cyclones, desertification, deterioration of river watersheds and the intrusion of water into non-saline groundwater in coastal areas resulting from the rise of the sea surface caused climate change and global warming

7. We stress the need to take the necessary actions, using science-based programmes to provide clean water a improved sanitation to communities and households, including:

    - Improvements in water treatment, reticulation, use and reuse, taking into account, where applicab traditional methods and knowledge

    - Integrated water resources management approaches for sustainable use, including protection groundwater resources, in addition to minimizing the impact of pesticides and fertilizer use a industrial pollution

    - Innovative methods of harvesting, storing and recycling, including innovation to reduce the costs of desalination, treatment and recycling of agricultural, industrial and wastewater, as well as technolog for new and renewable sources of energy, hydro, solar, and wind were widely welcomed

    - Effective sanitation processes and the effective use of primary, secondary and tertiary education on wa and sanitation received overwhelming support

8. We recognize the importance and tremendous potential that the biotechnology and related irrigation hydropow industries offer for poverty eradication, technological progress, industrial development and health improvemen

9. We stress the importance of responding to public and ethical concerns in the application of some aspects biotechnology, and, therefore, public awareness, regulations and legislation on biosafety are of great importanc

10. We agree to identify a network of institutions and individuals who have made significant progress in the field biotechnology, particularly in the medical, agricultural, forestry, animal, fisheries, marine and environmen biotechnology fields.

11. We stress the importance of creating a comprehensive water data and information centre among develop countries.

12. We encourage the adoption of international conventions to deal with cooperation on transboundary water sharing and conflict resolutions.

13. We call on the United Nations system to play an important role in the exchange of scientific and technological research in the field of water resources.

14. We acknowledge the tremendous progress and breakthroughs made by some developing countries in the vital areas of water management, water supply and sanitation as well as in dams, irrigation, hydro-energy and measures to alleviate the risks of climate change. We emphasize the need to learn from one another and share best practices and experiences among countries of the South.

15. We welcome the successful experiences registered through South-South cooperation mechanisms in some countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean and stress the need to replicate these performances and achievements in other developing countries.

16. We encourage member countries to work together to strengthen strategic partnerships between countries of the South so as to contribute to the sharing of knowledge, innovation and transfer of technology for better access to safe water and sanitation.

17. We emphasize the importance and the supportive role of the United Nations system, particularly the United Nations Development Programme, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization, the World Meteorological Organization, the World Health Organization, the United Nations Environment Programme and other United Nations institutions, the regional Commissions and financial institutions in promoting cooperation in the exchange of scientific and technological know-how in sourcing, efficient management, preservation and the sustainable use of water in developing countries. We express our appreciation to the role of other cooperating partners and stress the need to increase the capacity of these institutions to enhance their role in improving access to safe water for basic needs in developing countries.

18. We stress the fact that water is vital to sustain habitat and species' survival and that human existence depends on a safe and reliable water supply. In this context, we emphasize the key importance of water resources and sanitation in achieving progress on all fronts of development in the South and reiterate the fact that improving and promoting easy access to water and sanitation will lead to tremendous progress in the eradication of poverty and strengthen the efficient management, preservation and sustainable use of water in developing countries, including the achievement of the following:

    - The adoption of a policy of self-reliance for financing water projects and exerting efforts to obtain financing for water projects from lending agencies, capital markets and grants

    - The construction of dams in developing countries has proved its efficiency in alleviating drought and flood impacts. Therefore, capacity-building and financial support are strongly recommended for that purpose

    - The development and strengthening of human and institutional capacities for effective water management and service delivery and providing technical assistance through expertise to the member countries that need it

    - The development of irrigation and the transfer of low-cost technologies for safe water supply and treatment, in accordance with countries' needs

- The acceleration of the provision of technical and financial assistance to member countries in preparing nationally owned integrated water resources management and water efficiency plans according to their needs

- The enhancement of cooperation among riparian States, taking into account their respective interests, through bilateral and multilateral arrangements

- Support for more effective water demand and water resource management across all sectors, especially in the agricultural sector, for food security and rural development, livelihood, security and poverty eradication

- The exchange of experience on the application of good governance, water resources legislation, institutional reforms, transparency and water ethics

- The establishment, within the Trust Fund for Science and Technology, of a mechanism for South-South cooperation in the field of water

- The establishment of a G-77 achievement award in the field of water

- The sharing of South-South experiences on gender initiatives in water management

- The sharing of South-South experiences and knowledge on institutional and legal reforms, harmonization of policy and regulatory frameworks, decentralization and water rights

- The promotion of subregional, regional and international South-South partnerships, including civil society, community groups, the private sector and academia

- The enhancement of the dialogue mechanisms on water and sanitation in the United Nations framework, to encourage developed countries to address the concerns of developing countries in meeting the requirements of the MDGs such as transfer of technology and other related issues

- The promotion of groundwater sustainability in developing world regions by using new technologies for artificial recharge

- Desalinization is a strategic option for many developing countries, and focusing on research in this field is essential to reduce its cost and to enable member countries to expand the use of this technology

- We call for enforcing international laws so that water facilities and infrastructures are not targeted during wars and conflicts

19. We stress the importance of food security, as well as the area under irrigation in developing countries, which should be increased, including the acceleration and modernization of existing irrigation through the South-South sharing of experiences and knowledge on the basis of low cost, water savings, crop yield increase and knowledge relating to the intensification and diversification and conjunctive use of surface and groundwater.

20. We agree to meet on an annual basis, as deemed necessary, in order to exchange views on strengthening South-South initiatives to improve their endeavours in water in relation to the environment, livelihoods and poverty eradication. In this context, we welcome the generous offer by the Islamic Republic of Iran to host the next Ministerial Forum on Water. We convey the outcome of this Forum to the 5th World Water Forum, to be held from 16 to 22 March 2009 in Istanbul, Turkey, and call on participants to take into account the conclusions and recommendations of this G-77 Ministerial Forum.

21. We express our sincere appreciation to the Sultanate of Oman for the warm welcome and generous hospitality extended to all participants. We express also our appreciation for the achievements made by the Sultanate of Oman in the field of water resources development and management.